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Youth Education Program

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Abstract

Young adults in Monterey County are at risk of being in an abusive relationship and becoming a victim of domestic violence. Being in an abusive relationship has lasting effects, including low self-esteem, and negative effects to both mental and physical health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019), nearly 1 in 11 female, and 1 in 15 male, high school students report having experienced physical dating violence within the past year. About 26% of females and 15% of males will have experienced some type of intimate partner violence (sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking) before the age of 18. The Youth Education Program through the YWCA, was implemented to increase the youth's self-awareness and knowledge of healthy relationships in hopes to decrease those numbers. A series of weekly workshops were conducted because research shows it is necessary for people to hear messages 7-9 times in order to successfully retain information (American Psychologist, 2003, pg.6-7). Although the initial expected outcomes were not met, the project did obtain other successes that were not able to be measured quantitatively. It is recommended for this specific school site to have a male facilitator in order for the male students to really engage with on a deeper level. The collaboration of two separate facilitators would be more beneficial to the students of both sexes.

Keywords: Prevention strategy, youth outreach, domestic violence

Agency & Communities Served

The YWCA Monterey County's mission is to be “dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, and dignity for all” (YWCA Monterey County, 2018). This agency is all about social justice, from its mission to its programs and services. The Young Women's Christian Association began in 1913, when it established the Western Conference in Pacific Grove. It is both the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization. Today the Y has twenty-five million members in 122 countries. The agency in Monterey County provides various ministrations that are offered in both English and Spanish due to the large Latino population.

Domestic violence survivors are offered legal services where advocates provide assistance with divorce, custody, and restraining orders as well as civil harassment orders. The YWCA provides survivors of domestic violence with individual, family, and couples therapy and counseling. There are two other programs which include the domestic violence shelter and the human trafficking safe house. The domestic violence shelter offers transitional housing for 8 weeks, counseling, on-going support, and the crisis hotline. The hotline is available to any caller and if a client does not meet the criteria to be placed in the shelter they are referred to other local agencies that are able to provide assistance to the client. The human trafficking safe house provides long term housing of one year, counseling, and workshops to help the survivors deal with anger management, boundaries, and one workshop specifically named “safe people” which helps the women identify when and when not to trust individuals. The women are provided with educational and job training to prepare them to become independent and self sufficient. One last part of the YWCA is prevention and outreach, where the agency collaborates with school

districts and local agencies to provide youth with empowerment and vital education to strive throughout their adolescence.

The Y offers services to women, children, youth victims with parental consent, and males despite any demographics. Domestic violence does not discriminate against any particular race, gender, age, or socio-economic status (SES). The YWCA tackles on numerous social issues such as domestic violence, human trafficking, racism, and empowering women, all while promoting peace, justice, and dignity.

Problem Description

According to The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2016), domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically. Young individuals in Monterey County are at risk of being in an abusive relationship and becoming a victim of domestic violence. About 60% of Monterey County's population is made up by individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). According to Sabina, Cuevas, and Zadnik (2015), one out of every six Hispanic women experience intimate partner violence on a state level. These statistics are devastating considering the high population of Hispanics in the surrounding cities.

Contributing Factors

Considering the high population of Hispanics in Monterey County it only makes sense to focus on the contributing factors Hispanics face. Some contributing factors include cultural

norms and gender roles, such as machismo. Machismo is the expectation of Hispanic men and their role as being the man of the house. There is a stigma attached to their perceived behaviors and attitudes towards women. It is believed that women are responsible for taking care of the house, kids, and husband. It is their responsibility to please the husband and they are not consulted with any final decisions regarding finances or related matters. According to Mancera, Mungal, Santis, and Provencio-Vasquez (2018), “these behaviors are driven by men of Mexican origin (MMO) beliefs regarding men, women, and relationship dynamics that contribute to intimate partner violence” (p.1791).

There is a distinct differentiation between foreign born and U.S. born Latinas and the way they identify domestic violence. According to Cho, Velez-Ortiz, and Parra-Cardona (2014), United States born Latinas are more likely to report intimate partner violence than their foreign born Latina counterparts. Foreign born Latinas are used to the normalization and are not familiar with how to recognize serious violent behaviors displayed by their partners.

Lastly, racial discrimination plays a role in intimate partner violence (IPV) and Hispanic women. Perceived racial discrimination often increases the chances of domestic violence against ethnic minorities. “Survivors are reluctant to report an incidence of IPV because they are fearful of institutional abuse or discrimination” (Cho, Velez-Ortiz & Parra-Cardona, 2014).

Consequences

Women who have experienced domestic violence often have a negative outcome with their mental health. According to Stockman, Hayashi, and Campbell (2015), Latina women who have experienced IPV have an increase of prevalence of depressive symptoms and PTSD

(41-48%). The rate of depression with Latina women who have been abused is double than non-abused Latina women.

Not only is the quality of their mental health diminished, but their physical health as well. It is stated that when IPV is present it is more likely that Latina women engage in risky sexual practices and risky partners. It was said that “Mexican American women in abusive relationships found that initiation of condom negotiation may be in direct conflict with sociocultural and gender norms” (Stockman, Hayashi, & Campbell, 2015). This often results in contracting HIV, STIs and unintended pregnancies.

Lastly, IPV results in severe damage to women’s self-esteem. According to Duplantis, Romans, & Bear (2006), batterers target the victims character and appearance in order to isolate and decrease their self-esteem. Their tactic is to make them feel unwanted and unloved. Even after the abuse the low self-esteem lingers and women often either return to their abuser or find themselves in another abusive relationship but with a different abuser.

Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Gender Roles	Young individuals in Monterey County are at risk for being in an abusive relationship and becoming a domestic violence victim.	Mental Health Harm
Country of Origin		Physical Health Harm
Discrimination		Low Self-esteem

Capstone Project Description and Justification

Project Purpose

A workshop targeted to increase youth's awareness of domestic violence was implemented in Seaside Unified School District. This was an opportunity to expand the next generations' knowledge and awareness of a continuing cycle of domestic violence. The project included material that addressed gender roles, cultural norms, and stereotypes. It also introduced the different types of violence and the cycle of violence. For this specific age group it was crucial for some material on self esteem and self worth to be incorporated. That material is important for adolescents to review to clear up any false or unrealistic expectations for their future relationships.

Gender roles and cultural norms were especially important to this community due to the high population of Hispanics that make up Salinas. This project was used to fulfill the needs of the young adolescents whom might have had questions and this was definitely the opportunity they needed to bring them beneficial clarity. The goal was to be able to provide a safe space for the youth to learn and grow both individually and together.

Project Justification

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019), nearly 1 in 11 female, and 1 in 15 male, high school students report having experienced physical dating violence within the past year. About 26% of females and 15% of males will have experienced some type of intimate partner violence (sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking) before the age of 18. Intimate partner violence can be prevented through teaching and discussing safe and healthy relationship skills. This capstone project was a tool of prevention through a 10 week

course which covered important topics by a facilitator who inspires to be influential. A series of workshops once a week was conducted because it is reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that it is necessary for people to hear messages 7-9 times in order to successfully retain information (American Psychologist, 2003, pg.6-7). The material of this workshop was delivered in a way that was both age appropriate and culturally sensitive to the selected high school within Seaside Unified School District.

Project Implementation

There was a 10 week workshop that was presented to high school aged boys and girls in Seaside Unified School District. The workshop required about 10-19 participants who met once a week to discuss various topics such as communication skills, domestic violence, and gender roles. The participants were given a pre and post test in order to analyze their attitude and behavioral changes. The goal of this project was to increase awareness and empower youth within Monterey County. Over the summer research began in order to find existing curriculums that would help build the foundation of the workshops. The main curriculums that were utilized were Safe Dates and the Y.E.S. program. These guided the organizations and timeline of each session.

Once the sessions were outlined by each topic, the next task was to pull handouts that supported each topic. It was important to incorporate handouts and different activities in order to meet the needs of various learning styles of the participants and to keep them engaged. There were several meetings with the Outreach Specialist for approval during the finalization process of the workshops. Each lesson of the 10 week session was ready to be delivered to the participants around mid August, 2019.

There were some difficulties and confusion on what the pre/post test would look like, however an existing test was provided which aligned with the topics and goals of the workshop. It was ready for distribution the week prior to the start of the sessions. The summer was also be a time for the Outreach Specialist to finalize which school would be chosen to collaborate in presenting the program. The initial school who agreed to allow the workshops to take place on campus had complications which set back the start date by months. Luckily the Outreach Specialist had a Plan B, which was to partner with a previous school already interested in the program. A meeting was set up with Central Coast High School during the first week of the Fall 2019 semester. During that meeting, a specific class was selected which contained a mixture of 19 young boys and girls. They agreed for the facilitator to come once a week during a specific time and weekly alternating days. Central Coast has their own unique schedule due to the fact that they are a continuation school, so it was explained that it was best to facilitate the sessions on their A days during their last period of the day. The sessions included some icebreakers and at least two sessions were dedicated to getting the group familiar with both the facilitator and the other participants. It was important for them to feel safe and comfortable with the facilitator and each other due to the sensitivity of the following topics. The sessions also included identifying harmful behaviors as well as recognizing gender norms and stereotypes. Due to the high population of Hispanics in the area, the program also focused on cultural norms in relation to gender roles.

The section of the curriculum that covered gender roles was incorporated in order to help the participants identify what is healthy and what is unhealthy within a relationship. It is also important to address some of their potential unrealistic expectations for future relationships.

There was a session dedicated to focus on types of violence and the cycle of violence which introduced the topic of intimate partner violence. Starting Fall 2019, the program was implemented at a Central Coast High. The workshops were conducted weekly in collaboration with the specific dates and time set by Central Coast High School. The pre-test was distributed during the second session and the post test on the last session in mid November. The observations and evaluations were conducted and completed at the end of November. A detailed implementation plan and timeline can be seen in the Scope of Work in Appendix A.

Assessment Plan

The participants were given a pre-test at the start of the workshops which contained hypothetical situations of harmful behaviors and their likelihood of getting involved, their awareness of stereotypes, and their experiences with domestic violence. Once the workshops were completed the participants were given a post-test with the same questions. Results from both the pre and post test were submitted through Google forms and Google sheets to measure their behavioral and attitude changes.

Expected Outcomes

It was anticipated that this project would increase the youth's self-awareness and knowledge of healthy relationships. It is important that the participants gain basic knowledge of types of violence and the cycle of violence so they are able to identify warning signs and access the resources they need. This project was expected to expand their minds free from gender roles and explore what a healthy relationship should look like.

Project Results

As mentioned before the first two sessions of the 10 week workshop was dedicated to getting to know the students and help familiarize themselves with the facilitator. During the second session the participants were given the pre-test which was then transferred into google forms in order to later analyze efficiently. Some of the questions included how likely the student was to intervene in specific situations, if the student knows someone who has experiences dating abuse, and whether or not they agree with certain media portrayals of men and women. Focusing on the participants' initial responses to media portrayals, majority of the students responded in favor of the masculinity/femininity views of the media.

A realistic goal was to expand the student's mind and educate them on gender roles, toxic masculinity, and the unrealistic expectations of men and women that the media influences. By doing so, it was expected the see more Agree and Strongly Agree to the questions that pertained to those topics by the end of the workshop. The post test was distributed once on November 14th, and again on November 20th due to the lack of interest in completing the test.

By the conclusion of this project, it was expected to increase the self-awareness of the youth and their knowledge of healthy relationships. It was important to address gender roles in order to explore outside gender conformity. The goal was to improve their attitude and behavioral changes by the end of the workshops. In order to measure this change a pre and post test collected data and was put into Google forms. This was used to compare and contrast the data collected from both the pre and post test.

About twelve students completed the pre test and most of them took the time to read through the questions thoroughly. Their answers were honest and interesting. However when the

post test was initially distributed there were only eight students who completed it and most of the students marked one answer for the entire test. This made comparing the data of both tests extremely difficult. It was then decided that the post test would be redistributed in order to collect accurate data of their attitude changes. The following week eleven students retook the post test, however, the results were the same.

The project did not meet the expected outcomes that were hoped for. Only a few of the students were engaged and wanted to complete the post test honestly which made it hard to accurately measure the attitude changes of the entire group. All of the students were engaged during each session of the workshop and participated in conversations as well as activities. So it was a little frustrating to see the lack of effort given to the test when interest was previously displayed in the topics discussed. The project did achieve the students trust as well as the relationship building skills needed in order to initially implement this project. Connections were made and the facilitator's confidence in their skills and knowledge were increased.

Conclusion & Recommendations

In conclusion, the project had its successes as well as its shortcomings. Perhaps the students would have felt more compelled to complete the post test if the workshop was longer and there was more time to build a concrete relationship between the facilitator and the students. It is recommended to either have a solo male facilitator or co-facilitator in order to help engage the male students. The male students in this group did not particularly look up to the facilitator due to her gender. There were often remarks made that were sexualized which made it difficult to maintain their attention on the topic of the day. The female students were very much engaged and eager to participate in the activities.

The students were excited to partake in activities that did not require them to be sitting at a desk. It is recommended to include more hands on activities than worksheets in order to keep the students engaged. The students were more willing to engage whenever they were allowed to get up, draw, or speak. It is important to be mindful of their age and maturity level whenever planning for activities as well. One activity in particular discussed potential abusive behaviors which were taken out of context and the students poked fun, it is important to call the student's remarks out in a way that does not embarrass them but educate them.

Personal Reflection

This project has definitely helped instill confidence in the capabilities needed in order to be successful in this field. At the beginning of the implementation process, there were various doubts of incompetence, fear, and the inability to really connect with the youth. Each week, was a reminder of the previous week's success which helped push forward the following sessions. It was important to feel confident during each session and to sometimes fake it when needed. Through the support of those involved with this project, each week began to be easier to facilitate. One week in particular, there was a student in another class who passed away from a drug overdose, and there were a few participants who were struggling with the news. This week helped with the practice of dealing with the unknown and unexpected events. That week turned into a self-reflection for both the students and the facilitator. It was a learning experience that provided great lessons through trial and error. The time and personal growth needed through this journey of seeing a project from beginning to end was fulfilling. One area that succeeded major growth was the ability to build relationships with those whom are the targeted audience. It was important to make the students feel as though the facilitator is relatable in a way that is beneficial

to them. Building relationships amongst the students was especially crucial due to the sensitivity of the topics and this helped some of the students really make themselves vulnerable. It was definitely a means to an end.

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Appendix A

Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines	Supporting Staff
Met with mentor to discuss expectations for Spring 19		January 23	Emanuel
Met with Rayza once a week to go over her lesson plans		Jan-March	Rayza
(YEA meeting) Shadowed Rayza once a week at Alisal		Jan-May	Rayza
Helped Rayza plan for each YEA session		March-April	Rayza
Began to Co-facilitate YEA session with Rayza		April	Rayza
Responsible for outlining YEA Session (SOLO)		April 16	Rayza
Created entire 1 hour YEA session		April 23	Rayza
Facilitated YEA session at Alisal (SOLO)		April 25	Rayza
Met with potential collaborative middle school	Presented draft of possible presenting materials	April 30	Emanuel
Recruit kids for group- Stephanie may or may not take over this		April 30	Emanuel
Research Safe Dates, YES curriculum and other prevention programs		June-July	Emanuel/Caitlin
Create outline of curriculum		By end of July	Emanuel/Caitlin
Have each session planned out with activities and icebreakers included		Early-Mid August	Emanuel/Caitlin
Get feedback on curriculum		Mid August	Emanuel
Collaborate with Emanuel and School to schedule date/time for the group		End of August	Emanuel

Create Evaluations (pre/post) -Look into existing ones		End of August	Emanuel/Caitlin
Provide intake with kids at first meeting	See where the participants are at with the topics	September	Emanuel
Facilitate 10 sessions		Fall 19 September-November	Emanuel
Provide students with final intake form	See how the participants have grown	Mid November	Emanuel
Evaluate how each session went/overall	Measure the growth of behavioral and attitude change	End of November	Emanuel
Provide recommendations based on final evaluations		End of November	Emanuel
Food bank runs as needed	Provide students with snacks	September-November	Rayza